



pueblito

creating a foundation for life through
child & youth development

BACKGROUND

¡ArtWorks2!

Local counterpart: FUNARTE

Objective: Train rural community preschool teachers to use an new approach to the classroom environment, based primarily on art, which has all the necessary elements to encourage a child's development despite the impoverished setting

Location: Rural areas known as *La Montañita* and *El Regadío* just outside the city of Esteli, Nicaragua

Beneficiaries: 31 rural community preschools, 33 teachers, 300 preschool students (ages 3-5)

¡ArtWorks2! accomplishes the following goals:

- Provide a much-needed professional development opportunity for preschool teachers who have worked for years for no pay and in precarious conditions at rural community preschools;
- Improve the preschool curriculum, thus easing the transition from preschool to grade 1 and beyond;
- Contribute to a more inclusive and intellectually stimulating learning environment for preschool children from marginalized communities;
- Actively engage the parents of the preschoolers as well as the community at large in the education process (through art activities carried out in the community); and
- Improve the quality of preschool education in Nicaragua.

Counterpart organization - FUNARTE

FUNARTE, or the *Foundation for Creative Children's Art (Fundacion de apoyo al arte creador infantil)*, is a registered, non-governmental, non-profit, Nicaraguan organization, founded in 1989. Since its inception, FUNARTE has promoted constructive social change through art. FUNARTE uses art not only to advocate on behalf of children but more importantly to improve the lives of local children by teaching them to be thoughtful, creative and active citizens who are aware of their rights and able to speak up and be active members of their communities. Beyond an active mural program for almost 1000 children and youth in the city of Esteli and in the capital city of Managua, FUNARTE also works closely with the community preschool system and the Nicaraguan Ministry of Education to improve the quality of public education. FUNARTE has developed an innovative pedagogical approach to preschool education that uses art as the basis for ensuring that the physical, psychological, emotional and intellectual needs of children in the 0-6 age range are being met.

The project - ¡ArtWorks2!

¡ArtWorks2! is an initiative that encompasses teacher training, curriculum improvement and community involvement.

Firstly, ¡ArtWorks2! aims to complete the training of all community preschool teachers in the Department of Esteli by the end of 2009. 33 community preschool teachers representing 30 different community preschools, in the most remote districts, are being trained. The educators are learning how to use an innovative pedagogical method especially developed by FUNARTE experts. FUNARTE also carries out in-class supervision and support visits in order to ensure that the trainees are able to effectively apply the new knowledge in the classroom.

Secondly, ¡ArtWorks2! strengthens the preschool curriculum, thus better preparing the children to enter and graduate from Grade 1. The success of this initiative has resulted in the birth of a similar project, this time on the primary school level (see description of **Primary Colours**).

Thirdly, ¡ArtWorks2! involves mothers, fathers, extended families and other community members into the learning process by putting together art festivals, expositions, workshops, mural paintings and other activities that present the result of the children's work and engage the community at large.

FUNARTE – Pueblito Canada Partnership

Pueblito Canada and **FUNARTE** have been partners since 2002 working together to improve the quality of education in Nicaragua through the application of their curriculum proposal in both community preschools and state-run primary schools.

Pueblito Canada thanks both the **Canadian International Development Agency** and the **Wild Rose Foundation** of Alberta for their considerable contributions to this project.